


ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE



The unattended machine has a hopper for holding an inventory of uniformly-sized, individual, frozen or refrigerated portions of food and for maintaining the inventory in a frozen or refrigerated condition. Insertion into the machine of a

5 genuine dollar bill is verified by an electro-optical mechanism which signals control and monitor circuitry to initiate food preparation by causing a microwave oven below the hopper to open and rotate into a food-receiving position below a dispenser, located below the hopper, which then dispenses an individual portion of food into the oven by gravity. The oven then rotates to a horizontal cooking position and

10 closes its door, where the portion is heated by microwave energy for a pre-determined length of time. Upon completion of heating, the oven door is opened and the oven tilted downward and the heated portion of food is dispensed by gravity through an opening or port in the machine. Circuitry is provided for monitoring progress of the preparation and delivery cycle and for refunding purchase price in

15 the event the machine is empty or a malfunction occurs. Additionally, the machine may be adapted for monitoring and recording machine status and for notifying a remote location telephonically of problems or maintenance needs.